9/9/66

Dear Mr. Stanley,

Hastily, for I am rushing to complete another book and still have all the functions of a publisher to perform, let me respond to some of your letter of the 6th. I appreciate and thank you for its tone and agree with your opinion on "commercialism". As I see it, I am the victim of it, to begin with and now. If you knew what was going on, the theft and throat-cutting, the stealing of even lines from successful public appearances, the pressures of various sorts, you'd know this. When the history of this period is written, I am satisfied you'll find that it was my complete responsibility and moderation on the electronic media, for to begin with the papers and magazines would not touch the subject, that has opened it up.... Some of the story of the dirty doings will be coming out before too long. The fact that I have sacrificed the commercial value it will have to me is, I hope you will agree, ample evidence that I am in accord with your sentiments and have practised what I preach. It is also obvious I am least in a financial condition to do so.

You read WHITEWASH too hastily. At no point to I intentionally accuse the Commission members of "collusiveness. I begin in the introduction by setting the case for them. There is a distinction between the staff and the members I hope you will be able to make and that I did and do. It is a strange irony that mine, by far the most complete and strongest, is the one that seeks, though eliptically, to show how such a thing could happen. You'll be hearing more of this. Can you imagine Senator Cooper taking the shears to the Altgens picture? Or Senator Russell bringing in his home movie outfit to doctor the Zapruder film?

There is no doubt in fact or in my mind of the willfulness of the misrepresentation. I did not attribute it to the members of the Commission. Can you regard the doctoring of pictures, to take the most obvious of the many examples, as anything less than wilfful? Or the refusal to ask the obvious questions any law-school student could not have missed? Or to call the unheard witnesses? Or the selection of those to appear before the Commission members? Or the parts of the exhibits left out? I can go on and on. But is it extreme to restrict ones self to the evidence and to speak forthrightly when, in addition to everything else, the national honor and integrity are involved? Intimate knowledge of the facts would convince you I have understated what really happened in this investigation. Consider the import of Part 2 of WHITEWASH, or the addition to Markham's testimony and the failure to even charge her with perjury, or what they testified to, signing a blank affidavit.

Sauvage and Lane had the same difficulties on a smaller scale and a later date. I am the one who battled through the publishers, more than all the others together. Lane's book was rewritten several times. He had the same troubles and was fortunate enough to come in through the back or English door. A commission of British historians first worked it over and then a superb job of editing was done by a crew under Sannnenberg. Holt had already seen the profit potential in mine, which was selling well before Lane's was out.

Epstein's book is deceptive. It says little that is new. It documents part of my introduction, misuses the FBI Report, with which it also followed me, and became a weapon as he became a creature for a faction of the Commission's staff. Liebeler is his saint, Specter his villain. You will find there are no saints. His focus, as is Lane's, is on the members of the Commission, from the prejudices and in justification of the failings of the staff. It is senseless in our society to complain that the boss wants the job done, and it is dishonest to complain that the staff could not do what it wanted or was compelled to do what it didn't want to. There is always the honorable way of resignation. We have always expected this of public servants. It is a sad day when we lose it. I have not yet read Sauvage, but there

is perfectly sound complaint against Lane and his objective. I have private correspondence from him I will not use, but it confesses his animus. If you want to see this for yourself, take a simple touchstone. He has made the entire staff faceless, except for General Counsel Rankin, with whom he had a fight. While using quotes he has altered every question from the testimony to substitute for the name of the assistant counsel asking the questions the letter "Q". Because the questioning is very important and in any analysis of how the staff worked and who did what is essential, the reader of his book is left with no one else to focus on, only Rankin and the members, usually Warren.

As you say, this is an unusual subject and requires more than customary restraint. But who is "commercial" when my book was, indeed, by a great deal first and I hear on coast-to-coast TV the claim that Lane's, which wasn't even second, was first, when I called such false advertising to his publisher's prepublication attention and it continues. Or when others steal materials I loaned them to protect work writing, and sell it? And what of the papers in this. From the first they have been first silent and then discriminatory. Have you read Popkin's piece in the NYReview? Have you any idea how many papers persist in the fiction that a private printing does not exist, even when it has sold 10,000 copies. How about the major paper that got 12 free copies from me, then asked for a 13th for "reference" in its book-review department, which has yet to list it in the notations of those it daily receives? Or of Newsweek, which gave Epstein's bomb two pages, and the same to Lane's book, but still has to mention mine, Or of Book Week, which will neither mention nor review? Have you any idea how long a list I can make? Is it not the opposite of what you infer that I maintain what I hope is a dignified public silence on this, at my cost. The dishonesty of your part of the press is one that should be examined.

When you have read all the books with care and understand the subject, you will find, I believe, that I have done something of which I am justified in feeling proud. A year and a half before anyone else, I did a job that today lacks nothing essential anyone has since brought out and still have twice as much content as all the others together. Examine the phoniery in the pretense Lane's is the "brief for the defense" when it is totally lacking in that material, which is Part 2 of my book. And this is but a simple illustration. Does a single one of the others in any mature way address itself to the basic evidence, or even attempt, as I did, the retelling of the story in terms of the evidence? No one tackles this toughie, or the witnesses, or the Oswalds' government relations, or the entire story of the doctors and the autopsy, or the number of shots.

But it is not alone what I am not ashamed to call pride, especially because of the subject and what it involves. It is direction, doctrine. The others, save possibly for Sauvage, seek goats. Lane poses as a hero. Epstein pretends scholarship. Yet they seek to divert attention from the only places the whitewash could have been mixed, to hide the hands that were really on the brush. Believe me, you will soon learn how true this is. Again the irony. Mine, the strongest, is the only one not a direct assault on the personal integrity of the Commission members. It is no more an attack on the establishment than the reversal of a court decision. The others, which are, have a contrary reputation.

If you had the debts this has earned us, the remaining bills still to pay, the years of sleepless nights and still had no income, you might have a different attitude toward what was dishonest and was done you by "the competition". As I say, I have no doubt you will eventually learn all about this, for it is growing into a very nasty thing.....Thanks for your time,

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg